FIRST COMICS 1982 1987 FIFTH ANNIVERSARY
FEB 1988
4
LIMITED SERIES
NO. 4 OF 6
$1.75 $2.45 CANADA

michael moorcock's

Elric

the vanishing tower

Roy thomas and Jan duursema

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WHO ARE THESE GUYS, ANYWAY?

For ten thousand years the sorcerer-kings of **Melniboné** had ruled the Bright Empire aided by pacts with the ancient gods of Chaos.

Last to sit on the Ruby Throne was the albino, **Elric**. Weak and sickly, kept alive by sorcery and drugs, he was unlike his inhuman subjects for he possessed a conscience, though he often chose not to heed it.

With his throne usurped by his mad cousin, **Yyrkoon**, and his beloved **Cymoril** placed in a sorcerous sleep, Elric was manipulated by the Chaos lord, **Arioch**, into claiming the runeblade **Stormbringer**. With the sword, Elric needed no longer fear his weakness, for Stormbringer drank souls and would share its stolen life with him. So for vengeance and love, Elric led an armada against Melniboné. But fate betrayed him, for in destroying Yyrkoon he was also responsible, albeit unwillingly, for razing Imrryr and for Cymoril's death.

Now Elric is a wanderer. Hated by his scattered subjects and feared by humans, his only companion is **Moonglum of Elwher**.

LAST ISSUE: Theleb K'Aarna, a sorcerer of Pan Tang, had captured Elric and was about to use his inhuman allies to destroy the Castle at the World's End. **Myshella**, Empress of the Dawn, rescued Elric and used the Noose of Flesh to destroy the Kelmain host. Now Elric and Moonglum have stopped at one of the many taverns that dot the cities of the Young Kingdoms...

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A FIRST COMICS PUBLISHING PRODUCTION

A VISITOR HAS COME TO THE COURT OF KING URISH, THE SEVEN FINGERED MONARCH OF NADSOKOR, CITY OF BEGGARS AND FETID, MALODOROUS AROMAS...
WHY HAVE YOU COME TO MY KINGDOM, WANDERER?
BECAUSE, GOOD KING ?gagg?, I HAVE HEARD YOU HATE ALL WHO ARE NOT BEGGARS... BUT THAT YOU HATE ELRIC OF MELNIBONÉ MOST OF ALL.
IT IS SO. ONCE, LONG BEFORE HE BETRAYED IMRRYR, HE CAME TO MY CITY, DISGUISED AS A LEPER.
HE TRICKED ME, AND STOLE SOMETHING FROM MY HOARD... THE GREAT TREASURE CHEST, WHICH SITS BENEATH MY THRONE.
WHAT HE STOLE DID HIM NO GOOD IN THE END... BUT STILL...
AND YOU WOULD ?gagg? WELCOME A PLAN WHICH WOULD RESULT ?gagg? IN HIS DESTRUCTION?
AYE.' FOR WE HAVE A LAW HERE -- ANY MAN WHO LOOKS UPON THE SACRED HOARD OF KING URISH MUST DIE -- AND DIE MOST HORRIBLY--
--AT THE HANDS OF THE BURNING GOD.!!
AND, TAKING A DEEP BREATH THROUGH HIS KERCHIEF WHICH KEEPS OUT THE STINK OF NADSOKOR, THE VISITOR BEGINS TO OUTLINE HIS PLAN...

OLD HROLMAR...A RICH VILMIRIAN CITY-STATE WHICH BECKONS TO ALL THE IMAGINATIVE PEOPLE OF THE YOUNG KINGDOMS...
...AND TONIGHT, A CITY OF MURMURS AND WHISPERS.
...KILLED MOTHER AND FATHER TOO -- AND THE MOTHER'S LOVER, 'TIS SAID...
...AND THEY SAY HE LIES WITH CORPSES FOR PREFERENCE...
INCEST, WAS IT NOT ? ONE WHO SAILED WITH HIM SAID...
...AND HIS MOTHER HAD CONGRESS WITH ARIOCH HIMSELF, THUS PRODUCING...
...A TRUE PRINCE OF MELNIBONÉ WOULD DRESS IN MORE LAVISH STYLE, AND HE WOULD...
...AND YOU'RE POSITIVE THAT'S TRULY ELRIC KINSLAYER ?
THE BALLADEERS SAY HE'S DOOM-DRIVEN, YOU KNOW.
...HE LOOKS A GLOOMY FELLOW, RIGHT ENOUGH... NOT ONE TO ENJOY A JEST...
...SHORTLY BEFORE HE BETRAYED HIS OWN PEOPLE TO SAMORGAN AND THE SEA LORDS...
...SAY ALSO THAT HE'S AN IMPOSTOR... THAT THE REAL ELRIC DIED AT IMRRYR...
GENTLEMEN...

To Slay the Pale Prince

CONTINUING THE ADAPTATION OF
MICHAEL MOORCOCK'S The Vanishing Tower

by ROY THOMAS & JAN DUURSEMA
SCRIPTER ILLUSTRATOR

KURT HATHAWAY, LETTERER
LOVERN KINDZIERSKI, COLORIST
LAUREL FITCH, EDITOR

...MAY I BE OF ASSISTANCE?
EH? WHY, er -- WHATEVER D-DO YOU MEAN, SIR?
WHAT OF MY PENCHANT FOR VAMPIRISM OF A PARTICULAR SORT? I DID NOT HEAR YOU TOUCH UPON THAT IN YOUR HUSHED CONVERSATION.
I DESIRE ONLY TO KNOW WHAT YOU WISH TO HEAR, GENTLEMEN...
...AND THEN I WILL DEMONSTRATE THAT I AM TRULY ELRIC KINSLAYER.
W-WE MEANT NO HARM, FRIEND...
IN TRUTH, WE SPOKE OF ANOTHER... NOT YOU AT ALL...
DID YOU INDEED?
SIR, OLD HROLMAR IS A CIVILIZED CITY. GENTLEMEN DO NOT BRAWL AMONGST THEMSELVES HERE...
...BUT LIKE PEASANT WOMEN, PREFER TO GOSSIP?
YES! Ah—I MEAN, NO...
NOW, IF YOU WILL EXCUSE US...
HA HA HA

SOON AFTERWARD, AS ELRIC STANDS MUSING AT A NEARBY QUAY...
THEY FOUND ME, OLD FRIEND-- AND ASKED ME TO LIBERATE THEM FROM A CRUEL MASTER.
HOW COULD I REFUSE SUCH LOVELY DAMSELS?
TEE-HEE!
WH--?
MOONGLUM? IS THAT YOU?
YOU SEE I HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN YOU, PRINCE OF MELNIBONÉ. ONE OF THE BEAUTIES IS FOR YOU!
YOU ARE TOO KIND. BUT I THOUGHT YOU HAD LEFT TO THIEVE A BIT OF GOLD FOR US.
INSTEAD YOU FOUND THESE... LADIES OF THE MOONLIGHT?
SPLOOSH
THIS WAS UNJUST! I AM PRONE TO COLDS, AS YOU WELL KNOW...
AND PRONE TO DRUNKEN PLANS!
WE ARE NOT LIKED HERE, MOONGLUM...
4

THE CITY WATCH NEEDS BUT AN EXCUSE TO SET UPON US AND DRIVE US FORTH FROM THE TOWN ... IF NOT SLAY US.
MASTER ELRIC ... I HAVE A MESSAGE...
Eh? HOW DID YOU KNOW HIS NAME? I NEVER--
I... I MUST HAVE HEARD IT SOMEWH--
AAIIEE
Ah! I SEE A CERTAIN YOUNG DANDY FROM YONDER INN HAS FOUND HIS COURAGE--
--BEHIND A PACK OF HOODED ASSASSINS!
THAT'S THE ONE!
SLAY HIM-- AND ALL WITH HIM!
HE MUST HAVE BEEN A RICH LIE-ABOUT, AT THAT.
PROFESSIONAL ASSASSINS ARE EXPENSIVE IN OLD HROLMAR.
MMMMMM
BY THE GODS -- YOU ARE ELRIC -- ELRIC OF THE SWORD THAT SINGS--?!
YOUR EMPLOYER DID NOT TELL YOU WHOM YOU WERE TO FIGHT?
THEN YOU DESERVE TO LOSE BOTH WRIST AND SWORD--
--IF ONLY FOR BEING A DULLARD!
5

FLEE! 'TIS SAID BOTH MAN AND SWORD ARE THRICE-ACCURSED!
COME BACK, MY FRIENDS!
MY BLADE STILL HUNGERS!
MOONGLUM? WHERE ARE--
UNNH
...ELRIC...

...ELRIC...?
THANK ELWHER'S GENTLE GODS! I THOUGHT YOU SLAIN BY THAT POISONED BLADE!
THE ATTACKER-- CAME FROM BEHIND ME. HOW...?
I... BLUSH TO ADMIT IT...
...BUT I FEAR THOSE GIRLS WERE NOT ALL THEY SEEMED.
I REMEMBER SOMEONE TUGGING AT MY LEFT HAND, AND--
MOONSLUM! THE RING OF KINGS IS GONE! THE ACTORIOUS HAS BEEN STOLEN!
THEY STOLE NOTHING BUT THE RING. A LITTLE GOLD REMAINS IN MY PURSE. SO THERE WAS MORE TO IT!
UH... THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN WAITING TO TELL YOU, ELRIC...
THE GIRLS WERE THIEVES-- THE OLDEST TRICK ON THE SCROLL!
THAT ONE GOT IN THE WAY OF ONE OF THE ASSASSINS AS WE FOUGHT.
SHE'S BEEN DYING FOR HOURS... MUMBLING YOUR NAME...
...WHICH SHE NEVER LEARNED FROM ME, I SWEAR IT!

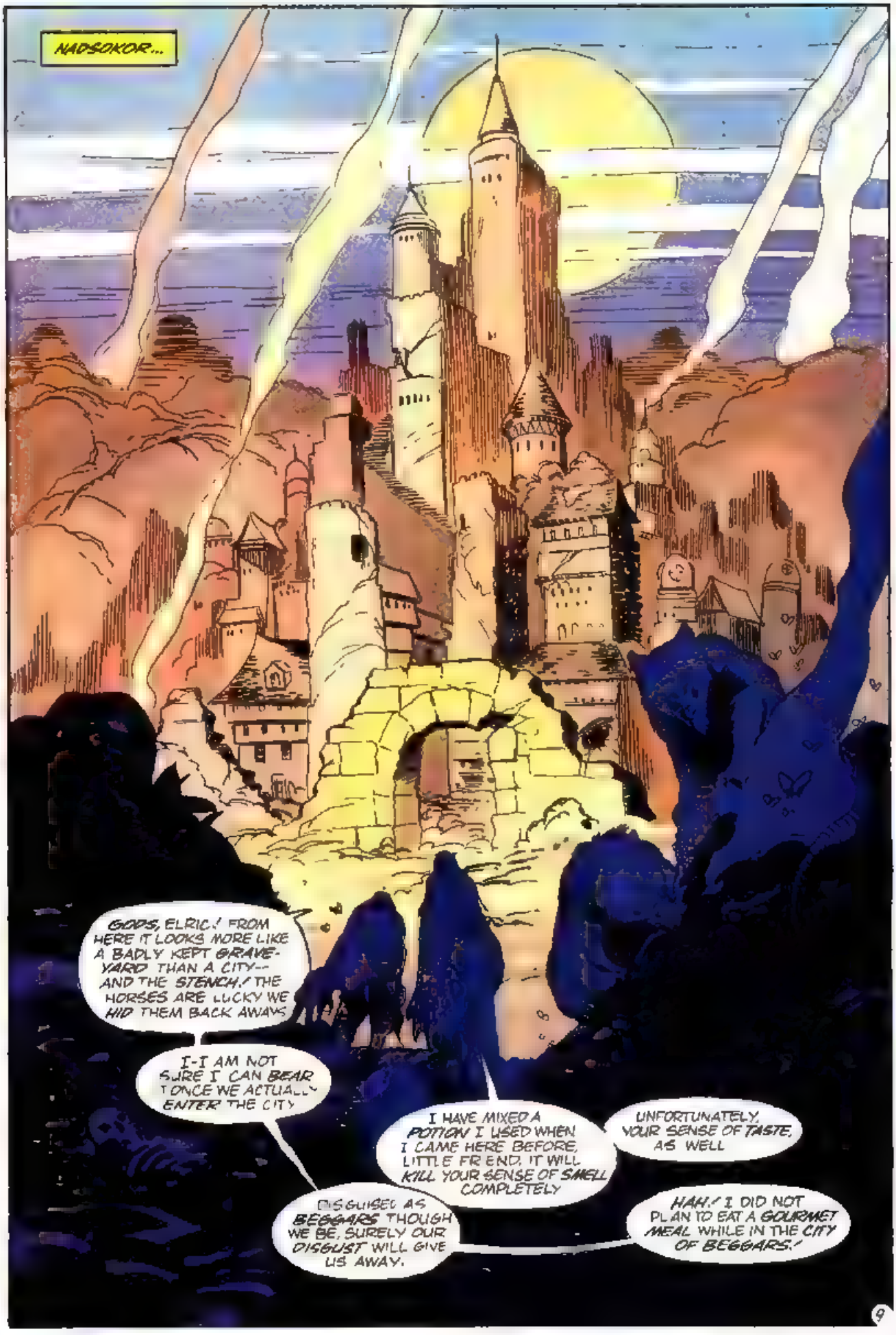
EL... ELRIC...
WHY DID YOU PLAN TO ROB ME, GIRL? WHO IS YOUR REAL MASTER?
URISH...
...STEAL RING...TO NAD... NADSOKOR...

SHE IS DEAD, ELRIC.
SHE WAS ONE OF THE BEGGARS OF NADSOKOR, I'D WAGER.
I ONCE RECOVERED SOME PROPERTY FROM ITS KING URISH, AND HE HAS NEVER FORGIVEN ME.
LET HIM KEEP THE RING, THEN. HE WILL BE SATISFIED.

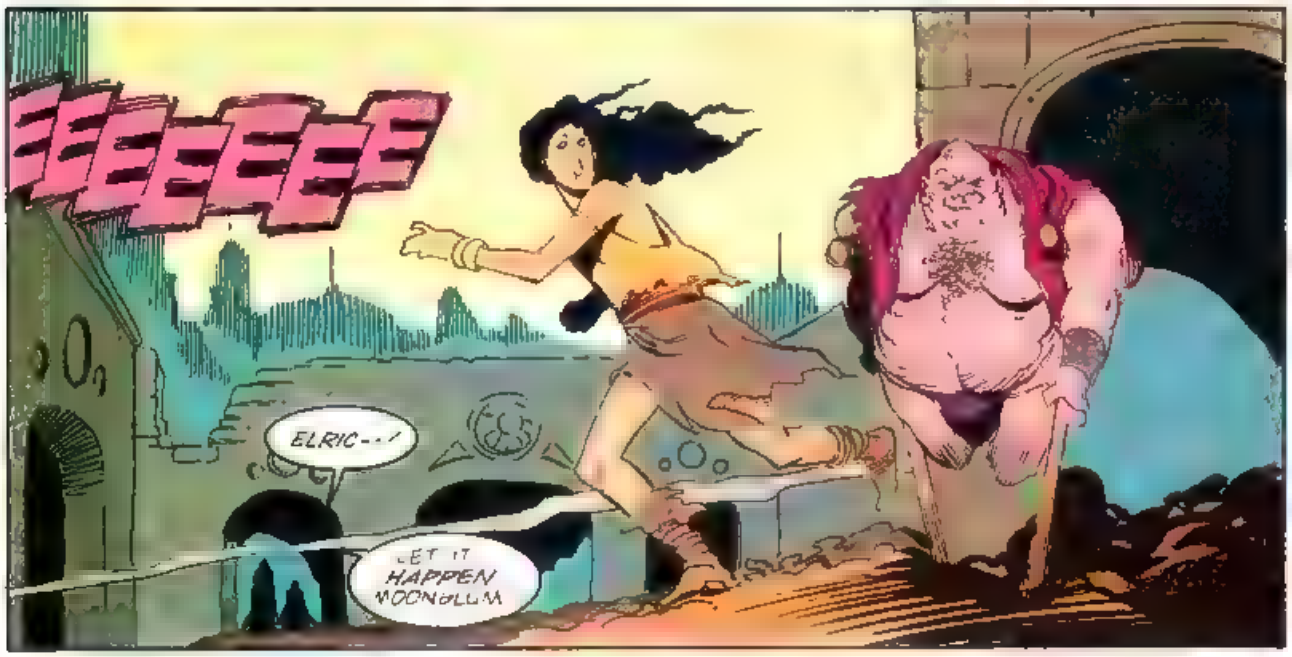
A CARAVAN COMMANDED BY RACKHIR OF TANELORN IS LEAVING JADMAR IN A WEEK. IF WE TOOK A SHIP 'ROUND THE COAST, WE COULD BE IN JADMAR IN TIME TO JOIN IT.
IT'S EXCEEDINGLY RARE FOR ANY-ONE OF TANELORN TO MAKE SUCH A JOURNEY. WE ARE VERY LUCKY FOR --
NO.

WE MUST FORGET TANELORN FOR THE MO-MENT. THE RING OF THE KINGS IS MY LINK WITH MY FATHERS.
MORE--IT AIDS MY CONJURING, AND HAS SAVED OUR LIVES MORE THAN ONCE.
I RIDE FOR NADSOKOR.
YOU NEED NOT COME WITH ME, IF YOU PREFER NOT TO, MOONGLUM.
MOONGLUM...?

WE'LL NEED EVERY PENNY WE CAN RAISE, ELRIC--
--IF WE'RE TO BUY DECENT HORSES FOR OUR INSANE JOURNEY.

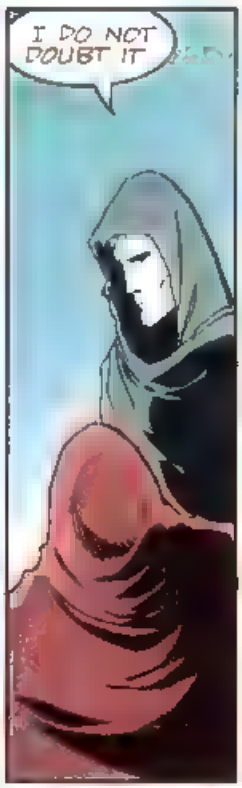

NADSOKOR...
GODS, ELRIC! FROM HERE IT LOOKS MORE LIKE A BADLY KEPT GRAVE-YARD THAN A CITY-- AND THE STENCH! THE HORSES ARE LUCKY WE HID THEM BACK AWAYS
I-I AM NOT SURE I CAN BEAR IT ONCE WE ACTUALLY ENTER THE CITY
I HAVE MIXED A POTION I USED WHEN I CAME HERE BEFORE, LITTLE FRIEND. IT WILL KILL YOUR SENSE OF SMELL COMPLETELY
UNFORTUNATELY, YOUR SENSE OF TASTE, AS WELL
DISGUISED AS BEGGARS THOUGH WE BE, SURELY OUR DISGUST WILL GIVE US AWAY.
HAH! I DID NOT PLAN TO EAT A GOURMET MEAL WHILE IN THE CITY OF BEGGARS!

IT WORKS! I CAN SMELL NOTHING FOR WHICH THE GODS BE THANKED
THE GODS ABANDONED THIS CITY WITH ITS ORIGINAL DENIZENS CENTURIES AGO, WHEN THEY FLED THE POX WHICH STRUCK IT
ONLY BEGGARS HAVE OCCUPIED IT SINCE . AND URISH, WHO BECAME THEIR KING!
EEEEEE


EEEEEEE
ELRIC--!
LET IT HAPPEN MOONGLUM

BUT--THAT GIRL- SHE'LL BE...
THOSE WHO ARE WHOLE EITHER IN MIND BODY OR SPIRIT CANNOT BE TOLERATED IN NADSOKOR

YOUR CYNICISM IS AS DISGUSTING AS ANYTHING THOSE BEGGARS DO


I DO NOT DOUBT IT

BUT WE ARE HERE TO RECOVER THE STOLEN RING OF KINGS
THAT, AND THAT ONLY, SHALL WE DO

THIS IS URISH'S PALACE STRANGE THAT THERE ARE NO GUARDS
WHY SHOULD THERE BE? WHAT HAVE THEY TO GUARD?
THERE WERE GUARDS THE LAST TIME I WAS HERE URISH PROTECTS HIS HOARD MOST ANXIOUSLY.
IT IS NOT OUTSIDERS HE FEARS, BUT HIS OWN DESPICABLE RABBLE
WELL, PERHAPS HE NO LONGER FEARS THEM.
A CREATURE LIKE KING URISH FEARS EVERYTHING!

BEST BE WARY WHEN WE ENTER THE HALL
HAVE YOUR SWORD READY TO DRAW AT ANY HINT THAT WE MAY HAVE BEEN LURED INTO A TRAP
SURELY URISH WOULD NOT SUSPECT WE'D KNOW WHERE THAT GIRL CAME FROM!

AYE. IT SEEMED GOOD CHANCE THAT ONE OF THEM TOLD US...
.. BUT NONETHELESS, WE MUST MAKE ALLOWANCES FOR URISH'S CUNNING.
H

S A B L E

RETURN OF THE HUNTER

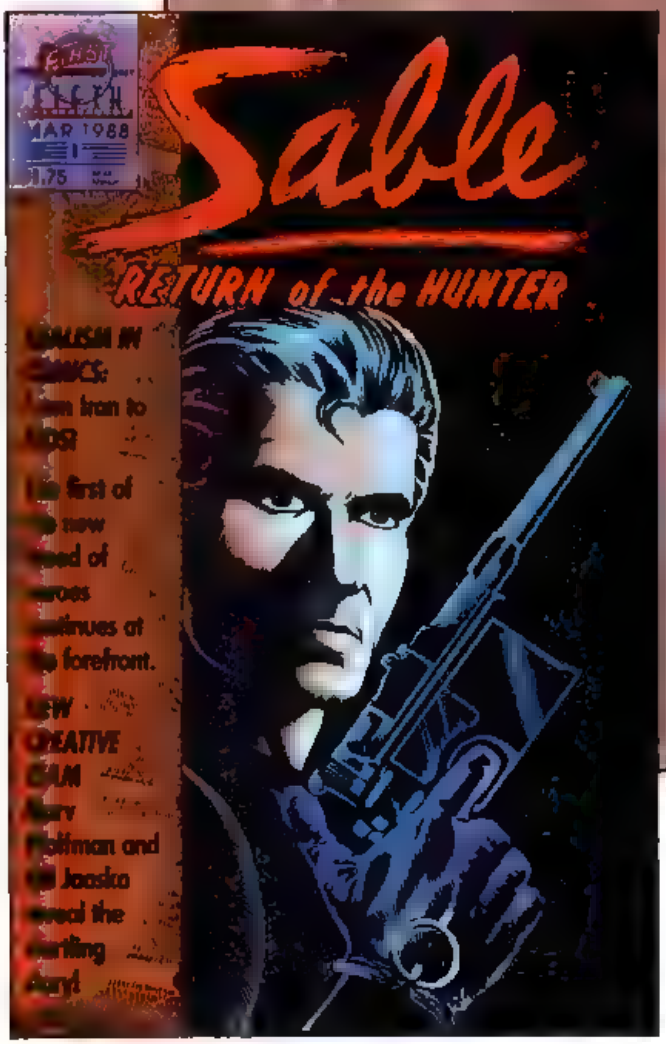
BY MARV WOLFMAN

AND BILL JAASKA

'NUMBER ONE'

HE'S GOT YOUR NUMBER

NEW SERIES!



FIRST COMICS 1982 1987 FIFTH

COMING IN NOVEMBER FROM FIRST. COUNT ON US.

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B A D G E R

NUMBER THIRTY-THREE

BY MIKE BARON,

AND RON LIM

THE WINNING NUMBER

FIRST COMICS
1982 1987
FIFTH

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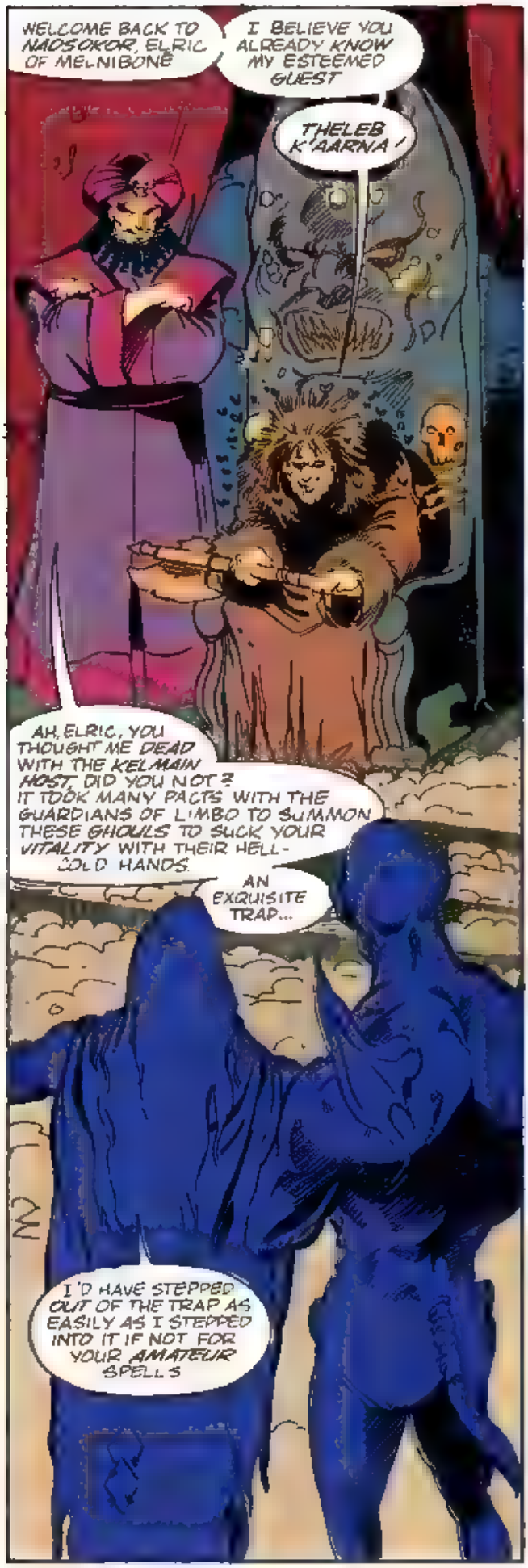
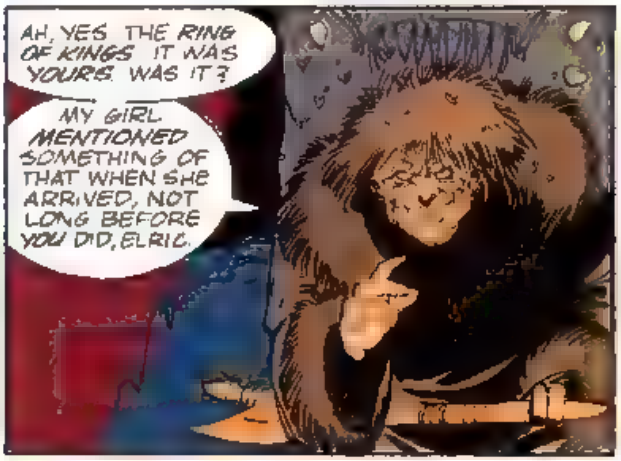
BRAZIERS BURNING GARBAGE... NO WONDER THE CITY REEKS SO!
AND THERE'S URISH'S THRONE, NO DOUBT--EMPTY THE WHOLE PLACE IS DESERTED, ELRIC
PERHAPS WHY DO YOU STOP?
WHAT'S YOU HEAR?
POSSIBLY NOTHING OR MAYBE ONE OF THOSE BIG RATS. IT'S JUST THAT.

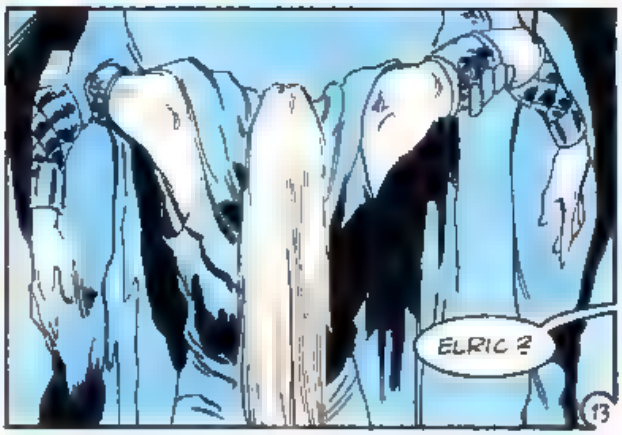
ARRGH!!
LIGHT-BLINDING MUST--
MOONSLUM? WHERE HAVE YOU --
GONE?
12


WELCOME BACK TO NADSOKOR, ELRIC OF MELNIBONÉ
I BELIEVE YOU ALREADY KNOW MY ESTEEMED GUEST
THELEB K'AARNA!
AH, ELRIC, YOU THOUGHT ME DEAD WITH THE KELMAIN HOST, DID YOU NOT? IT TOOK MANY PACTS WITH THE GUARDIANS OF LIMBO TO SUMMON THESE GHOULS TO SUCK YOUR VITALITY WITH THEIR HELL-COLD HANDS.
AN EXQUISITE TRAP...
I'D HAVE STEPPED OUT OF THE TRAP AS EASILY AS I STEPPED INTO IT IF NOT FOR YOUR AMATEUR SPELLS

YOU ARE DISCOMFORTED THEN, BY MY GHOULS? I AM SORRY
AND AFTER YOU JOURNEYED ALL THE WAY HERE TO MAKE AMENDS FOR YOUR PAST CRIMES, TOO.'

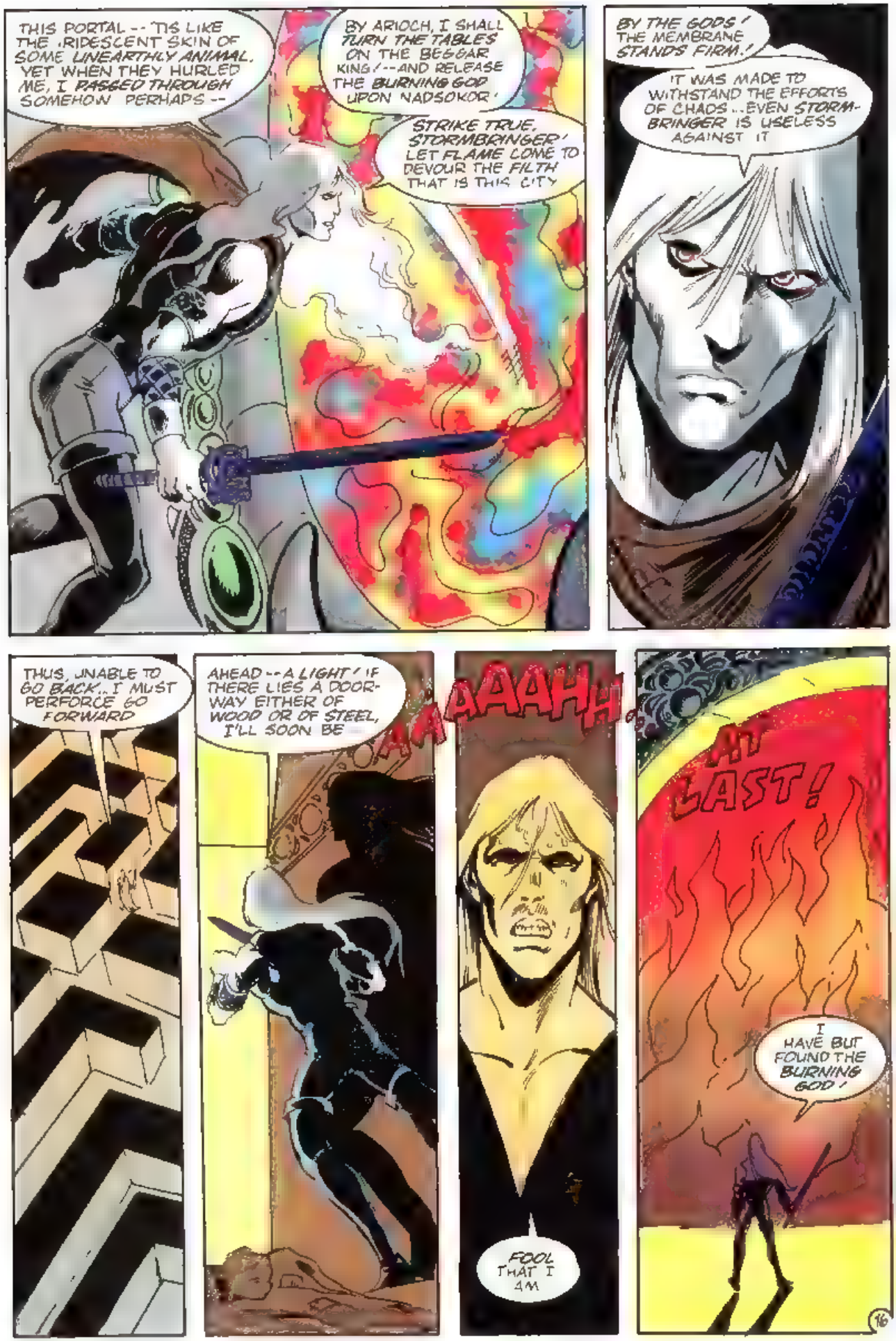
I H HAVE COME... TO REGAIN MY P-PROPERTY
MY R-R-RING!


AH, YES THE RING OF KINGS IT WAS YOURS WAS IT?
MY GIRL MENTIONED SOMETHING OF THAT WHEN SHE ARRIVED, NOT LONG BEFORE YOU DID, ELRIC.


ELRIC?

OH NO! YOU DO NOT DIE YET MELNIBONEAN! THE FORMALITIES MUST BE SUFFERED FIRST. BEFORE MY ASSEMBLING COURT!
I MUST SENTENCE YOU FOR YOUR CRIMES AGAINST NADSOKOR-- AND AGAINST THE SACRED HOARD OF KING URISH!
PUT HIS HEAD UP, MY DEAD SERVITORS! LET HIM SEE URISH, KING OF ALL BEGGARS, MAKE HIS JUST DECREE --
--AND LET HIS EYES REMIND HIM THAT IT WAS THELEB K'AARNA WHO BROUGHT ABOUT HIS DOWNFALL!
ELRIC OF MELNIBONE! BY MY GREAT CLEAVER HACKMEAT, SYMBOL OF MY DIGNITY AND POWER, I DO CONDEMN THEE TO THE PUNISHMENT OF THE BURNING GOD!
ONCE IN AGES GONE, WHEN THE FIRST MEN OF NADSOKOR WERE STRUCK BY THE POX, THEY BEGGED CHAOS TO CLEANSE THE R CITY OF ITS CURSE
LET YOUR BEGGARS TAKE HIM FROM HERE KING URISH
HIS VITALITY S REWARD ENOUGH FOR MY GHOUL-THINGS!
AS A GRIM JEST, CHAOS SENT THE BURNING GOD — WHO DESTROYED WHAT REMAINED OF THEIR POSSESSIONS, BEFORE A PRAYER TO LORD DON-BLAS OF LAW LED TO THE BURNING ONE BEING IMPRISONED IN THE CITY
HAVING HAD ENOUGH OF THE LORDS OF THE HIGHER WORLDS THOSE STILL L V NG ABANDONED THE CITY BUT THE BURNING ONE STILL DWELLS HERE
--AND HE SHALL HAVE YOU!
TAKE HIM TO THE LABYRINTH!

--AND THROW HIM TO THE BURNING GOD!
BY NARIJHAN'S DROPPINGS HE'S COLD!
WELL HERE'S THE PORTAL.
NOW LET'S GET OUT OF THIS HELLISH PLACE!
G-GODS
NOT EVEN.. THE SNOWS OF THE LORMYR AN STEPPE...
COULD COMPARE WITH THAT GREAT COLD..
15


THIS PORTAL -- 'TIS LIKE THE IRIDESCENT SKIN OF SOME UNEARTHLY ANIMAL. YET WHEN THEY HURLED ME, I PASSED THROUGH SOMEHOW PERHAPS --
BY ARIOCH, I SHALL TURN THE TABLES ON THE BEGGAR KING! -- AND RELEASE THE BURNING GOD UPON NADSOKOR!
STRIKE TRUE, STORMBRINGER! LET FLAME COME TO DEVOUR THE FILTH THAT IS THIS CITY
BY THE GODS! THE MEMBRANE STANDS FIRM!
IT WAS MADE TO WITHSTAND THE EFFORTS OF CHAOS ..EVEN STORM-BRINGER IS USELESS AGAINST IT
THUS, UNABLE TO GO BACK.. I MUST PERFORCE GO FORWARD
AHEAD -- A LIGHT! IF THERE LIES A DOOR-WAY EITHER OF WOOD OR OF STEEL, I'LL SOON BE
AAAAAHH!
FOOL THAT I AM
AT LAST!
I HAVE BUT FOUND THE BURNING GOD!
16

I HAVE NO QUARREL WITH YOU MY LORD! I, TOO SERVE CHAOS!
BUT I MUST EAT! CHECKALAKH MUST EAT!
I AM BUT POOR FOOD FOR ONE SUCH AS YOU, BURNING GOD!
BUT THOU ART THE ONLY FOOD THEY SEND!
COME BACK, MORTAL!
IT IS AN HONOR TO FEED A GOD!
I'LL BE NO ONE'S ROAST PORK--
NOT EVEN A GOD'S!
17

YOUR LUCKY NUMBER

WHISPER

NUMBER TWELVE

ORIGINAL ARTIST RICH LARSON

JOINS CREATOR/WRITER STEVEN GRANT

FOR A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS ISSUE!

COVER BY
BILL
WILLINGHAM

1982 FIRST COMICS 1987

COMING IN DECEMBER FROM FIRST. COUNT ON US.

AMERICAN FLAGG!

NUMBER FIFTY

BY HOWARD CHAYKIN

AND MIKE VOSBURG

THE NUMBER ONE CHOICE

SPECIAL FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!

1982 FIRST COMICS 1987 FIFTH

COMING IN NOVEMBER FROM FIRST. COUNT ON US.

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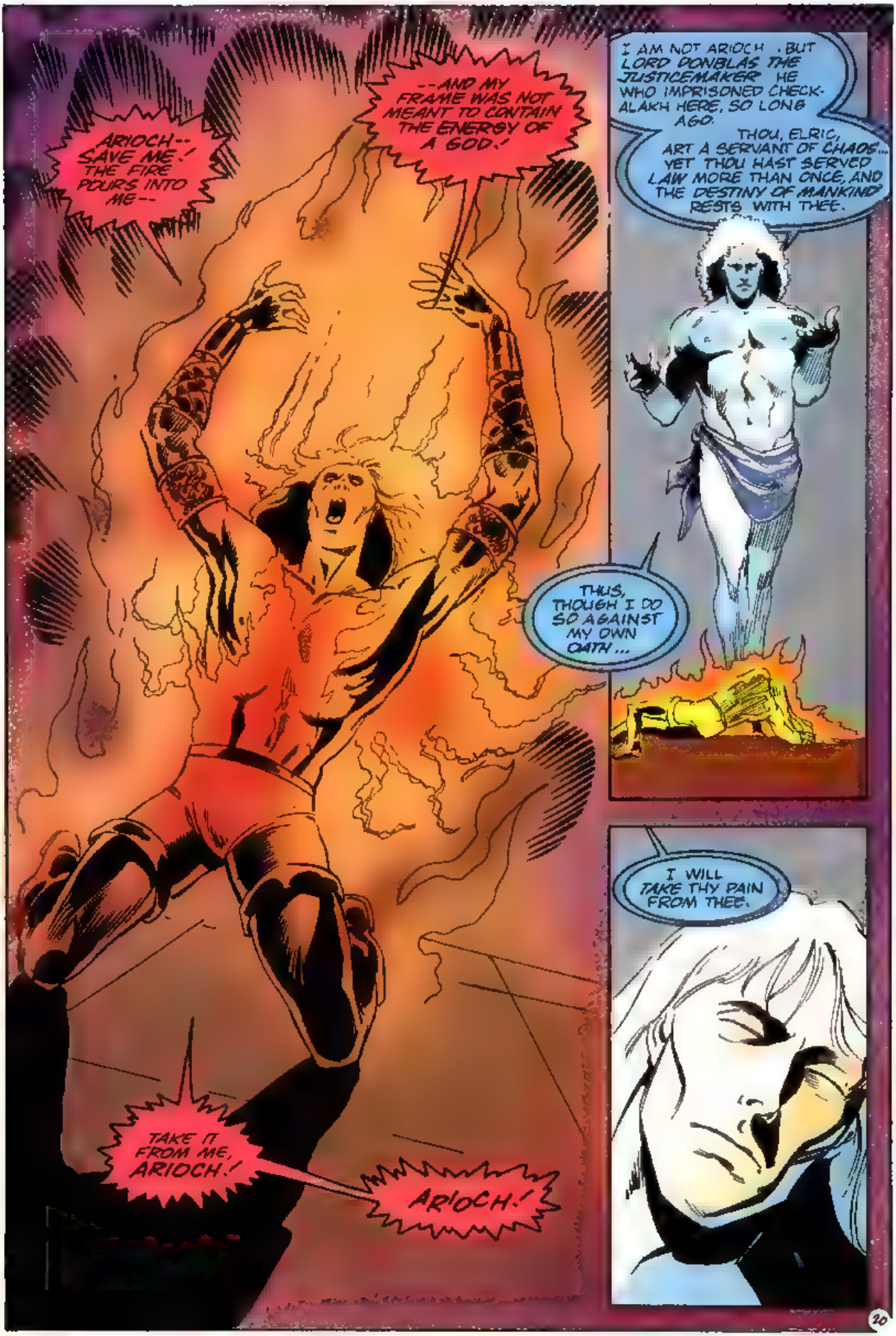
YOU ARE NO ORDINARY BEGGAR...
I AM ELRIC OF MELNIBONÉ AND I BEAR THE BLACK SWORD.
LORD ARIOCH IS MY MASTER--A MORE POWERFUL ENTITY THAN YOU, LORD CHECKALAKH
ALAS, THERE ARE MANY MORE POWERFUL THAN I.
THEN WHY NOT COMBINE YOUR STRENGTH WITH MINE NOW THAT WE NEAR THE GREAT PORTAL?
TOGETHER WE CAN TEAR IT DOWN--AND TAKE OUR REVENGE
LORD DONBLAS OF LAW DECREED...
...THE PORTAL WILL OPEN ONLY WHEN I AM DEAD!
AND I AM NOT DEAD...
...ONLY HUNGRY!
YOU CANNOT ESCAPE THROUGH THE PORTAL!
I AM AWARE OF THAT.
76

ALREADY YOUR VERY CLOTHING BEGINS TO SMOLDER! SURRENDER YOURSELF TO ME!
NEVER!
ARIOCH! THOUGH THIS CREATURE BE A FELLOW LORD OF CHAOS -AID ME TO DEFEAT HIM!
YOU WILL NOT, WILL YOU, MY PATRON? YOU SAID THAT GREATER THINGS ARE BEING PLANNED ON AND ABOVE THE EARTH--
LEAVING NO TIME FOR EVEN THE MOST FAVORED OF YOUR MORTAL CHARGES!
HERE'S A FEAST FOR YOU STORMBRINGER-- THE SOUL OF A GOD!
AAAAAH!!
19


ARIOCH--SAVE ME! THE FIRE POURS INTO ME--
--AND MY FRAME WAS NOT MEANT TO CONTAIN THE ENERGY OF A GOD!
TAKE IT FROM ME, ARIOCH!
ARIOCH!
I AM NOT ARIOCH. BUT LORD DONBLAS THE JUSTICEMAKER HE WHO IMPRISONED CHECK-ALAKH HERE, SO LONG AGO.
THOU, ELRIC, ART A SERVANT OF CHAOS... YET THOU HAST SERVED LAW MORE THAN ONCE, AND THE DESTINY OF MANKIND RESTS WITH THEE.
THUS, THOUGH I DO SO AGAINST MY OWN OATH...
I WILL TAKE THY PAIN FROM THEE.

THE PORTAL IT S GONE
VANISHED LIKE THE PAIN THAT SEARED ME YET THE ENERGY REMAINS, AS IF -
WHO'S THERE ?
I CAME TO AID YOU IF I COULD, BUT I SEE YOU HARDLY NEEDED ME
MOONGLUM! WHAT BECAME OF YOU, AFTER THELEB K'AARNA'S MAGIC BLINDED US BOTH ?
I DIVED BENEATH ONE OF THE HEAPS OF GARBAGE LITTERED ABOUT URISH'S HALL.. AND LISTENED TO WHAT PASSED
IT SEEMS URISH HEARD WHAT WE HEARD.. THAT THE CARAVAN OF TANELORN IS ON ITS WAY BACK TO THAT CITY
KING URISH HATES TANELORN... PERHAPS BECAUSE IT IS THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT NADSOKOR IS
.. AND THELEB K'AARNA IS TO SUMMON CREATURES FROM HELL TO ENSURE THAT THEIR ATTACK SUCCEEDS.
WHEN DO THEY LEAVE ?
THEY HAVE ALREADY GONE .
MY OWN POWERS OF SORCERY ARE LIMITED WITHOUT THE RING OF KINGS ON MY HAND
I MUST RECOVER IT-- THEN GO TO THE AID OF RACKHIR.
THEY SAID SOMETHING OF PROTECTING URISH'S HOARD IN HIS ABSENCE THERE MAY BE A FEW ARMED MEN IN THE HALL
I HAVE THE STRENGTH OF THE BURNING GOD WITHIN ME, MOONGLUM .
I THINK WE SHALL BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH AN ARMY.!
21

GREETINGS -- AND BEWARE -- FOR I AM THE GUARDIAN OF URISH'S TREASURE!
OH AND DO NOT TH NK A SWORD CAN SLAY ME -- NOT EVEN THAT SWORD! T IS MY WARD-PACT..
CURSE THELEB K'AARNA HE PREPARED AGAINST US

WARDPACT ?" WHAT IS THAT ?
HE HAS A WARD AGAINST SWORDS - BE THEY SUPERNATURAL OR NO
HE WILL NOT ATTACK, UNLESS HIMSELF ATTACKED -- BUT IF WE SOUGHT TO SLAY HIM WITH OUR SWORDS -
-WE SHOULD BE STRUCK DOWN BY ALL THE POWERS OF HELL !
WE COULD NOT POSSIBLY SURVIVE.
BUT YOU JUST DESTROYED -- ABSORBED A GOD ! WHAT IS A DEMON COMPARED TO THAT ?
THAT WAS A WEAK GOD. AND THIS IS A STRONG DEMON !
SO... FAREWELL, UNLOVELY ONE
MAY YOUR MASTER NOT RETURN TO RELEASE YOU, AND THUS, ENSURE THAT YOU SQUAT IN THIS FILTH FOREVER !
MY MASTER IS THELEB K'AARNA-- ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL SORCERERS AMONGST YOUR KIND
NOT AMONG MY KIND I SHALL BE SLAYING HIM SOON -- AND YOU WILL BE LEFT HERE UNTIL I DISCOVER SOME MEANS OF DESTROYING YOU
HMMF !
23

GODS! YOUR POTION AGAINST THIS PLACE'S STINK HAS WORN OFF GIVE ME SOME MORE I BEG YOU!
MY PURSE WAS TAKEN BY THE BEGGARS I HAVE NO MORE.
YECCH! I JUST HOPE I CAN KEEP FROM VOMITING LONG ENOUGH TO --
QOK!
WATCH YOURSELF!
BEGGARS-- OUT FOR BLOOD!
WELL, WELL.
AHRR
HERE'S A TIDBIT FOR YOU, STORM-BRINGER!
24

I DON'T MEAN TO ROB YOUR BLADE OF ITS MEAL, MY FRIEND— BUT I HOPE IT DOESN'T MIND IF I DEFEND MYSELF!
HRRGK
STORMBRINGER HAS SOULS IN PLENTY TO DRINK..
AAAA
SLLASSH!
THERE'S NO PLEASURE IN KILLING SUCH RABBLE, IS THERE, ELRIC?
OR... PERHAPS YOU ABSORBED SOME OF THE CALLOUSNESS OF THE LORDS OF CHAOS ALONG WITH THE BURNING GOD TODAY
COME, MOONGLUM
LET'S TO RACKHIR'S AID!
15

THE NEXT DAY... SHORTLY PAST MIDDAY...
THERE'S THE CARAVAN, ELRIC. SURROUNDED ON ALL SIDES BY THE BEGGAR ARMY OF KING URISH'
AYE - WHILE SOMEWHERE NEARBY, THELEB K'AARNA WORKS HIS SPELLS'
I HAD HOPED WE COULD REACH RACKHIR BEFORE HE WAS SURROUNDED.
'TIS HOPELESS NOW eh? THE ODDS ARE A THOUSAND TO ONE AGAINST US
THAT THEY ARE
THEN - WE GO BACK?
NO MOONGLUM
-- WE ATTACK!!
NEXT
TANELORN ETERNAL!

Melnibonéan Mailbox!

435 N. LASALLE, CHICAGO, IL 60610

Thanks, again...

I'd like to grab a little space once again and thank everyone who took the time to rummage through their records to supply readers with a complete listing of Hawkwind cuts (I'm *still* getting letters!) I'd also like to thank the people (you know who you are) who sent cassettes of the record ngs. I hesitate to mention anyone by name for fear the copyright police will dropkick your door. But thanks.

Dear Laurel,

Ever since the very first Elric ser es from Pacific Comics, I have been an Elric fan. I have read some of the novels by Moorcock and I have purchased many games and other memorabilia which have to do with Elric and my hobbies. Throughout the Elric comics, which I also read, the most enjoyable until the Vanishing Tower series have been the Sailor on the Seas of Fate by Michael T. Gilbert, and the Weird of the White Wolf, also by Gi bert. When I heard of the end of Gilbert's artwork in the Elric series, I was disappointed I bel eved that no one could match the style and quality of art in an Elr c comic by Gilbert. I was wrong.

Issue 2, along with issue 1, have both included the same high quality, but different styled artwork as before in the Elrics. Now, though, there is a new artist, skilled in yet another way, finesse, reality and respect to the genders of characters. This new artist, Jan Duursema, is well up to the level of quality I wished in the next Elric artist. She still keeps Elric and his companions looking mystic and strong, while the women, oppos te from most male artists, more respectful and realistic. I also give her credit for the great art on the male body, particularly muscle placement and toning And the women are very... womanlike in appearance, unlike the humongous figures of the other artists' women (if you catch my drift). Her portrayal of the mystic creatures of their land is also of very fine quality and still has the grotesque features that some mystic creature should have (irrelevant to what I said before). The colorist, also a woman, Lovern Kindzierski, does a great job in the coloration of Elric, his companions and his foes, and the superior shading on these characters. Overall I give this book, according to its art, a definite A+. According to its story and book quality, another A+. Again I say congratulations to artist Jan Duursema, colorist Lovern Kindzierski, editor Laurel Fitch, letterer Carrie Spiegle, and (the male odd-ball) scripter Roy Thomas, and good luck on further issues!

Jonathan Romano
16907 Ave. de Santa Ynez
Pacific Palisades, CA

*Gee, an all woman team on a book, what a novel idea! (...ouch, sorry.) You're kind of right, Jonathan, but **Lovern Kindzierski** is a* he. *You'll notice it's Lovern, not Laverne. And with issue #5, the male/female ratio will be perfectly balanced as **Nicholas Koenig** comes on as inker.*

Fellow Companion,

Wandering within a remote bookstore, I came upon "Elric' The Vanishing Tower" #2 quite by accident. Flipping through the pages, I realized this book has to be mine. The artwork was stunning especially the one on page 13 where Elric stands over the recently deceased "slave of Theleb K'Aarna." One could look into Elric's eyes and see the soul of the dead demon.

I'm a big fantasy gamer myself and wonder if any of the people on your staff, or even Michael Moorcock, have ever ventured within the realms of imagination. If yes, please list the characters used since I also like to ask stupid trivial questions. (Mine was Migan the Monk who could kick monsters' asses up and down the dark dungeon stairways, using his *bare* hands and feet!)

Well, guess I'll be rambling on... Keep up the fantastic artwork and stories and your readers will praise your name worldwide! (Well, perhaps...)

Joe (The Journeymen) Webb
Address withheld

*I can't speak for **Michael Moorcock** — but I have played once or twice.*

Dear Melnibonéan Mailbox,

Okay, guys and gals! I could handle a few "wools" and a "poof," but come on, I mean don't take it too far. After all I don't want to find out that Elric's " .#23 sun block has arrived" from the indicia! ...nice touch...

By the way, thanks for making one of the best books I have read.

Brian Young
9712 Five Oaks Road
Fairfax, VA 22031

Glad you got them, because I hate having to explain the indicias.

Dear Laurel,

I've followed Jan Duursema's work over the years and it has

"[Jan Duursema] still keeps Elric... looking mystic and strong, while the women are very... womanlike in appearance, unlike the humongous figures of the other artists' women (if you catch my drift)."

never been finer than it is now. I would have written sooner, but I wasn't aware of First Comics' Elric adaptation until issue #2 of The Vanishing Tower. I especially enjoyed the dream sequence in the first three pages. The use of crayon gave the artwork a refreshing texture.

I have one question about the last issue though: on page ten, if Stormbringer must drink blood once drawn, then how can Elric even offer to spare the creature's life?

Gerald Enz
135 Milwaukee Street
Mauston, WI 53948

Stormbringer doesn't drink blood, it drinks souls. And while the sword doesn't have to be "fed" each time its drawn, it certainly prefers it that way.

Dear Laurel & Co.,

Briefly — thank you. Until today I thought the realm of comicdom was restricted to Marvel, DC and Epic. Never before today have I *heard* of First. My loss. I am only 23, but have admired Elric since I could read. Up until today's discovery my only glimpses of Elric were cover artists (great but brief); Barry Windsor-Smith (foppish and overshadowed by a Cimmerians' muscles) and my own amateur attempts.

I am gratified for your graphic novels and will collect them all against future value.

As per your copyrights, what's a "#23 sun block" and "Poof!"

Dean Cormier
35 Willoughby Apt #6
Elliot Lake, Ontario
Canada P5A 1W1

Perhaps you should talk to Brian. Oh, all right. 1) And what is Elric...? 2) And what's the name of this series?

Dear Melnibonéan Mailbox,

Thank you ever so much for bringing in Jan Duursema to draw Elric. I've missed seeing her work since she left Arion, those many years ago. Not that I dislike any of the previous art, oh not at all! My favorite team was Gilbert and Russell, by far. Working apart, they're great artists, but together, they seemed more than the sum of their two parts, more than just a team of two artists; you could say they were a sort of "Two Who Are One." I hope to see them work together in the future on Elric (but not just yet, I'm plenty happy with Duursema. By the way, what is the language of origin of that name? I've never seen one even vaguely similar before; quite interesting.)

In response to T. Shaw's letter (#2): neither Yyrkoon nor Moonglum have been depicted correctly. Both are supposed to be bearded. The description you give of Elric certainly does not fit the "classic elf." It fits the D&D elf, yes, but neither the "elf" (Sidhe/Tlwth Teg) of Celtic legend, nor the "elf" (Fay/Faerie) of medieval romance, nor even the "elf" (Alf/Elf) of Northern myth.

In response to J. Simmons: Pern would be great in comic form, but Covenant?!? That would be incredibly tedious, unless the books were heavily edited, which would ruin it anyway.

In response to Laurel: since you asked... books I'd hate to see adapted: The Falcon and the Snowman, Vanna Speaks, The Republic, Silas Marner, Chariots of the Gods?, and Tolkien's books (*no* one could do them right).

By the way, I am overjoyed to hear that all the Eternal Champion stories are to be put out in graphic novels. Will Graphitti again be publishing signed (and numbered) limited edition hardcovers? I certainly hope so. Keep up the good work.

Stan Corwyn
535 Cordova Road
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Yes, coming in November Graphitti Designs will offer the signed and numbered hardcover ***Elric:Sailor on the Seas of Fate*** *graphic novel for $35.95. You can order them through your local retailer, or direct (please add $3.00 for shipping and handling) from Graphitti Designs, 1140 N. Kraemer, Unit B, Anaheim CA 92806.*

NEXT ISSUE: To aid Rackhir the Red Archer, Elric begins a desperate battle of sorcery against sorcery. "Tanelorn Eternal" by **Roy Thomas, Jan Duursema** and **Nicholas Koenig**.

— Laurel Fitch

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